

VZCZCXRO8423  
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #3052 2661453  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 221453Z SEP 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9545  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003052

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: KARBALA ISF COMMANDER OUSTED

REF: BAGHDAD 2967

Classified By: PRT Leader Don Cooke. Reasons 1.4b,d

This is a PRT Karbala Reporting Cable

¶1. (C) Summary: Karbala ISF commander MG Ra'ad Shaker Jawdat al-Hasnawi has been ousted. He reportedly will be reassigned to serve as IP chief for Diyala Province. Ra'ad's take-no-prisoners style and penchant for self-promotion apparently were viewed by Da'wa Party rival Governor Aqeel Mahmoud al-Khazali and his mentor, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, as liabilities in the run-up to provincial elections. End Summary.

#### Governor Prevails

¶2. (C) Governor Aqeel has prevailed over Da'wa Party rival provincial ISF commander MG Ra'ad in their contest for supremacy here. According to police contacts, Ra'ad received today an order from Baghdad reassigning him to serve as IP chief in Diyala Province. Military contacts report a more face-saving version of the story, saying that Ra'ad will request the reassignment during a meeting with Prime Minister Maliki on September 22. They add that Ra'ad predicted his supporters would demonstrate against his transfer and that he advised the PRT to avoid leaving FOB Husayniyah on the twenty-second (we have rescheduled our planned movements).

¶3. (C) Aqeel's discontent with Ra'ad became increasingly apparent in recent weeks. On September 10, the Governor announced that he would "shut down" 76 ISF checkpoints and 90 police watchtowers, stating that the province could not be held "captive" to security measures. On September 17, IP contacts informed us that a "special investigation committee" had arrived from Baghdad to look into allegations of police brutality against Karbalans. The committee reportedly was formed at Maliki's request and specifically directed to look into leadership issues.

#### A Coordinated Putsch

¶4. (C) Ra'ad's take-no-prisoners style and penchant for self-promotion apparently were viewed as liabilities by Aqeel and Maliki in the run-up to provincial elections. Urban business contacts have told us that, while they credit Ra'ad and his deputy (and eminence grise), MAJ Ali Hamid Hashim, with having quashed the violence and chaos that reigned here little more than one year ago, they regard the heavy-handed security regime--especially the many checkpoints snarling traffic here--as a serious impediment to economic progress. Farmers, particularly in the former Sadrist strongholds of al-Husayniyah and al-Hindiyah (whence Maliki hails), have been the most vocal in complaining of abuse at the hands of over-zealous police.

¶5. (C) The progression of events presaging Ra'ad's departure suggests Aqeel and Maliki executed a coordinated putsch. Although many Karbalans will be glad to see the ISF commander

depart, Ra'ad does have avid supporters. Whether they will be sufficiently outraged by his ouster (or, perhaps, financially induced) to demonstrate remains to be seen. We suspect, however, that the affair will be viewed with mixed emotions by most, who--while no fans of the ISF commander--vividly recall the not-so-long-ago days when militias operated with impunity here.

Comment

-----

¶6. (C) Ageel would not have moved to depose Ra'ad without Maliki's firm backing, suggesting that the Da'wa faction headed by the Governor believes it can succeed in the provincial elections without the support of party members in the Ra'ad/MAJ Ali clique (see reftel for further on the Da'wa split here). Personal animus between Ageel and the ISF commander no doubt helped to fuel their rivalry, but we see Ra'ad's demise largely as a product of his own hubris. While never failing to associate himself personally with security triumphs (real and imagined) here, he nevertheless failed to notice that the winds of public opinion had changed in favor of a less-restrictive environment. Besides the question of how Karbalans will react to the news, a big unknown is who will replace Ra'ad as ISF commander here. MAJ Ali is too junior in rank (albeit not in experience) and may follow Ra'ad to Diyala. End Comment.

CROCKER